

Creation

Post-Impressionist Poems

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Horace Holley



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THE INNER GARDEN. VERSE

THE STRICKEN KING. VERSE

THE MODERN SOCIAL RELIGION

THE DYNAMICS OF ART

(In preparation.)

Creation

Post-Impressionist Poems

Horace Holley

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DEDICATION

O GOD, Thou knowest I
With what few things and slight,
Form, music, colour and my power of words,
Created heaven in this deathly place.
Aye, as I struggled for the air I breathe
And seized my bread and water from the earth
By toil and pain,
Thou knowest, God, I built a little heaven,
An atmosphere, a dream
More fixed than hills beside the ocean,
Where I have lived content.
God, if Thou hast not to struggle,
If Thou art free in fact as I in dream,
In will as I in hope,
What larger heaven Thou hast built thyself!
Sometimes within this cloudy mirror
I glimpse it steadfast, and my passion hurts
Like wounded birds in storm.
O there shall I enter,—no, not enter,—
But I shall make its equal, stone on stone,
Thy watching architect, and dwell therein
Godlike, in our good time.

Creation

The Vision

I CLIMB.

The old spirit of the race, like hidden music,
Tugs at my toiling feet and hands,
Beats on my thought. I pause;
The whole world dances to a strange sad measured
tune.

Baffled to reach sheer heights of silence
I close my ears. The world shall dance,
But dance from my own spirit's rhythm!
Deafened, I climb.

The old spirit of the race, dawn-mist,
Taking a thousand lights and gleams,
A sheen perceptible on peak and plain,
Tangles the flow of river, the stillness of tree,
The action of men in labour.

Beauty! The spirit of the race proclaims. But I
No longer perplexed, seeking the sun's pure blaze—
Life's colour shall be the hues of my own dream!—
I close my sight, and blinded, climb.

Suddenly, gaining the utmost peak,
Opening my eyes, I see beneath the sun
United in an unguessed radiant glory

The whole world changed,—created, re-created
Mine, mine to love and know ! And,
Giving my ears and senses their desire,
Silence at first, then slowly arising,
The flux of musical rhythm swift and deep
Binding all things in one tremendous march,
The glad progression of my conscious spirit !
Now, kneeling in speechless wondering gratitude,
Pierced through by free, creative wills and moods,
I give myself to this, the common earth
Redeemed, dissolved in my long-prayed-for vision !

Men, rivers, trees : to you I turn again,
Too strong for hate, too humble for doubt and fear,
Descending from this peak of ecstasy
To change your drugging music for this pæan,
To drive away your pestilent dangerous beauty
For this renewing, soul-seen living sun !

The Well Beloved

O THE well beloved,
Fortunate, fortunate men and women !
They show the only authentic virtue
Desirable in every race and clime :
To be at home in one's own soul
And comfortably fit, like a student's gown,
The folds and wrinkles of one's nature.

I love to fall upon one of them suddenly
Just out the window, or round the corner,
When I am vacant or grieving or hateful ;
I know them by a secret sympathy,
And I go straightway healed, as by a spell,
Strutting a little, hearty, bold, superb,—
Spilling over, in short, as a man's life often should.

I remember each of them I've seen :
Such days are mirrors hung against my hope.
There's one, now, leaned beside a mossy well,
Dipping his fingers, lingering.
Within his eyes I saw
Continual amazement, the revelation
Of sheer meanings in things blinked at, passed
over, since,—

Well,—Wordsworth, we'll say ;
And one that followed a rebel mob all night
To feel the human pulse at point of bursting.
(And when he came again among us
So strangely catholic, titan he, we stared in awe.)
And one that stood before an antique desk
Pondering old difficult words in a parchment book,

Seldom turning a page, so deep he peered
Into the lost childhood and mystery of time
Glimmering through the philosophic Greek ;
And then another (he too, an old, old man)
Whose sweeping beard fell down and almost hid
The tawny violin he pressed
Rapturously to him, like a new mother ; and I
waited

Impatient for a fierce music to stab me ecstatic,
(But he deeply, deeply listening
To some old master or some grave inward tune
Forgot me, though I coughed.)

O, O the well beloved !

Who taught them the true secret of being
Over our heads who wait but hear it not ?
They never hurry, never disintegrate their souls,
Fill the moment and the life-time richly up ;
Grow to the time and place they find themselves
Inevitably, like the weather,
And seem to a casual passer-by
The very spirit of the brook or forest,
Its human symbol, its reality ;
Become the lordly genius of all knowledge
That holds the piecemeal generations
Fixed to a conscious, unifying will.

They are not many,
But where you meet but one or two
There's the rare odour in the world's garden,
The poignant taste in the soul's wine,—
The essence that memory feeds upon,
Sick of the common waste of life,
To write a noble record or a joyous dream.

In a Factory

SMOKY, monotonous rows
Of half-unconscious men
Serving, with lustreless glance and dreamless mind,
The masterful machines ;
These are the sons of herdsmen, hunters,
Lords of the sunlit meadow,
The lonely peak,
The stirring, shadow-haunted wood,—
Of mariners who swung from sea to sea
In carven ships
And named the unknown world :
Hunters, herdsmen, sailors, all
By trade or chase or harvest
Winning their substance
Rudely, passionately like a worthy game
With a boy's great zest of playing.
O labour,
Whoso makes thee an adventure
Thrilling to the nervous core of life,
He is the true Messiah,
The world's Saviour, long-awaited, long-wept-for.

In a Café

I

HOW the grape leaps upward to life,
Thirsty for the sun!
Only a crushed handful, yet
Laughing for its freedom from the dark
It bubbles and spills itself,
A little sparkling universe new-born.
Well, higher within my blood and ecstasy
You'll sunward rise, O grape,
Than ever on the slow, laborious vine.

In a Café

II

I DRAIN it, then,
Wine o' the sun, sun-bright,
And give it fuller life within my blood,
A conscious life of richer thought and joy.
And yet,—
That too will perish soon like withered leaves
Athirst for an ultimate sun
Upon the soul's horizon.
Come down, O God, even to me,
And drain my being as I drank the grape,
That I, this moment's perfect thing,
Live so for ever.

A Gauguin

TO see, know, passionately take to heart
The terrible beauty, in feature and in soul,
Of one I heartily, heartily hate ;
Then, possessed by her magnificence,
Wholly become it, lover-like for the time,
Create her perfect likeness, line and form,
Conspicuous for the world's astartled wonder :
This is the last mystery of art,—
Moulding, with a strong, slow, hate-masterful hand,
The delicate mask of some tormenting beauty.

A Pastel

YONDER the towered city, yonder the world . . .
A heart-beat more, and surely from the East
Another land will show
Its delicate promise native to our joy
Over the mauve and silver twilight :
The soul of some remote, unguessed Japan.

Les Morts

STRANGELY between the darkness and my
heart

The lost eyes shine,
And hands, fonder than all desire,
Pass slowly on my hair and face.
Whispers, arising from old depths of dream,
Hover within my thought, awaking tears.

How soft,
How soft and tenderly clinging
Pass the hands of the dead
Over our hair in darkness.
These are they that living we could not hold,
That slipped like lustral water
Out of our hands, away ;
And all our passion, all our desperate prayer
Held them, O held them not.

Myth

GOD bless me ! how that rascal time
Keeps on his poet's tricks !
I' the full daylight stare of trained historians and
doctors,
Under the very hands of modern bridge-builders,
aeroplane-inventors and what-not,
He's imperceptibly filled my heart with a new
romantic myth
Rich-flavoured as any tale Greek schoolboys heard
On Attic slopes of a shepherd's holiday !
Those boys grown up and changed,—those boys
grown men ?
Freckles a City Mayor, three children, frock-coat
and public title ?
(He swam our swimming pond three times across);
Champion a judge, his car outside the court,
Whom surely God designed a prime first baseman ?
And Hornet a clothes-importer,—prominent, etc. ?
No, no !
They are not *men*, like all these common lives,—
I'll not believe it, though across the ocean
Newspapers and letters mark their late success.
No.
If they are not still young, eternal boys,
Their age has steeped itself in richer essence
And turned them into joyous demigods.
Their true life takes my memory like a myth

Witnessed each day by the bright holiday sun,
The glad, splashing river, the haunting odour of
 cherry blossoms,
And my own faithful heart, that yearns—
That yearns *for demigods, not men.*

Vale

HER eyes turn mutely, patiently
 Like a hurt fawn's away, moist with a sense
Of some great passionate faith or promise
Broken, denied to the living-out of life.
And in the muter stillness where they stand
He sees as through an opened window
The last petal from a well-loved bough
Tremble and flutter down ;
Hears, as from a neighbour orchard,
A friendly throstle flute his parting tune,
And suddenly, suddenly knows from her, from him,
That spring itself, fleeing a stricken land,
Has passed for ever.

England

I GAZE upon the golden, steaming hills,
England! and yield a grateful heart to thee.

What! this cottage thatched against the sun,
This April morning steeped in fallow glebe,
And not an English heart broken in rapture
To keep thee—England?
The Vandal poets wait against the coast
To conquer thee and give the land a soul.

The Plain Woman

WHAT is the beauty of women?
Listen!—a song that makes the whole world
sob
Its aching heart away.
But I?
I am the silence closed about the song
That keeps it beautiful.

Everyman

I CURSED,—she wept ;
And from her tears and broken heart
Eden arose about me, and I stood
Perfect within her beauty.
God ! how has that spirit hid unseen
Behind the clods and hates of daily life ?

The Lonely Cup

WITHIN the dusky room
Betweenwhiles of the fire's insistent flap
My silver spoon taps out
Like startled sentinel's musket,
The steaming tea
Hisses against the cup like far-off rapids,
Whirlpools of dim alarm . . .
Impelled, I deeply gaze within the amethyst liquid
Somehow become a globed, translucent fate.
Shapes, colours, figures, dreams and deeds
Create, conjoin, dissolve ;
Ideas, evolutions, histories, moods and souls
Steam richly up and fill the empty room.
No broken heart, no desolation,
But life's vast wonder, changing, quick, intense,—
A whole fellowship of things imminent and real,
Portentous times to come,—sweetens for me
The lonely cup.

Skyscrapers

A FOREST of strange palms
That stir not, nor sway in the wind,
Nor nod sleepy at evening, nor reach to nestling
birds
A warm and comfortable mossy bough ;
Strange giant palms
Rigid and sternly fixed in the purple sunset.
One day the loud vexed ocean
Will drive a furious tempest from the East
To lash your stony trunks,
To tear your earth-devouring roots
And shake upon a shore deserted
This terrible fruit of flame long petrified.

Homeward

THERE is no other bosom for a grown man
To sob his whole heart-bursting grief upon
Than the sweet motherhood of his own native race ;
No voice to call him back from loneliness
Than his own language, uttered from the first
comfortings of love
By the hushed lips of poets and faithful women
Speaking into the great darkness
That he, in his dark time, may turn homeward
again and find
The world's heart warmly near.

The Dance

SLOW moonlight steeps the jungle-glade,
And all the movement, all the pulse of night,
Gathers within the hollow-sounding ocean.

Long, melancholy waves
Beat nature's avid life within my blood ;
An essence slips from the still trees
Freeing my thought from dream.

I rise,
Feeling the air like womanhood about me,
Arise and grope through silence to the moon,
Then turn, sway, bow and pause again,
Waiting the rhythm.

Find me, sea-loud night !
Find me, for you are spent and old.
I bring fresh heart and joyous consciousness
Will give you speech, soul, freedom, thought,—
Will tell the old, heroic lie of life
So gaily none will doubt for another age.

The rhythm falls like women's passion
Upon my lips, my hands ;
The world is sudden music and I dance,
I dance, the soul of the lonely, moon-steeped glade,
The thought, the freedom of the laboured sea,
Swayed by a grace not mine
In worship to a long-forgotten god.
The womanhood of things closely and warm
Presses my thrilling senses,

Creating at my fingers and my eyes
A vision,—Eve, all palpable and warm,—
That beats upon my sobs
And mates my life with passion.
Eve!

I come . . . O Eve!

Then, like a setting moon, a storm subdued,
The rhythm closes round about itself,
Passing to secret consummation
Beyond nature, farther out than thought,
Lost even to heart-beats.

And I, tossed by, forgotten, wingless to follow,
Sink back into the apathetic darkness
With earth's ten million years,
Into the prison-house of tree and ocean.

Eve. . . .

The Crowd

FED from the gloom of night-strewn barren
streets

And gorged from the gloomier night of barren
homes,

The heavy, corpulent crowd

Enormously sprawls the house of carnival,

Mute as a foeless, mateless sea-deep monster

Heaving through livid, phosphorescent caves

Its bulk of terrible hunger seeking prey.

As one great staring Thing the brutal crowd,

Passion-distended,

Rolls ponderously out its whole slow length,

The avid, pitiless will of huddled men

Absorbing into one vapid, bottomless soul

Its long-craved prey of pleasure.

The dancers flutter, dazzling Its vacant eye ;

These girls with shining trays of heaped fruit

And wines from the world's mad reckless south

Steep drowsily Its wandering senses ;

Deafened by changing music, It grows partly glad.

How did I come a part of this huge Thing,

Myself so harmless ?

Yet I too fled from my own hateful gloom,

From many a biting sorrow,

Gladly forgetting myself and others

To surge with these the warm sleek blazing house,

The house of carnival.

So the monster dies, Its bloated power
Dissolves in tears. I look and deeply know
The secret parts, like me, of the corpulent Thing,
The avid men and women of the crowd.
And O these dancing girls, this glittering fruit
The Thing gluttoned Its empty heart upon,
'Twas all the broken pieces of old joy,
The fragments of our man and woman dream
Which, blindly coming together,
We sought amid these changing lights and sounds
To take, to gather up, fragment by fragment,
And shape into one conscious soul again.

I, when the rear gate of my life opens,
From all such tragic hypocritic days
Shall turn to the far mountain of my secret will,
That stark, still place, to build a small cottage there
Beside a whispering brook,
To sit alone and think of many things.

The Egoist

“SHE has no soul.
Her almond eyes diminish to a spark
And change the sun to amber.
When she looks at me
I draw without myself and pass, unwilling,
The strange lids of her eyes, and enter
A garden that knows no law,
Sowed with imaginations like a god’s.
I enter and become
Another self, drunken
By new thoughts and hot-pulsed danger.
I long to sing, to prove my madness,
Dancing away from habit,
Responsibility and the grave laws of soul.
A woman has no right to perilous thoughts.
She has no soul, and O,
I lose my own, and all my satisfied past,
Desiring her.”

They

SHE, with smile of wrinkled stone,
Watched Lola dance.

Like naked flames
Blown dazzling by a masterful wind
Frantic with conflagration, leaping on
To seize intolerable smokeless heights ;
Like branches, laurel and bay,
Gently, soberly borne by virgin girls
In white procession
To lay upon some holy monument ;
Like stars that light through storm
Astonishing the soul—
Two stars above the rushing tempest poised . . .
Her hair, her limbs, her eyes :
O God ! how Lola danced !

He
Wearied a little, gray before his time,
Polite, attentive . . . apathetic . . .
Quickened, knew within his blood
Suddenly the old adventure ;
Within his thought
The tense, creative pull and tingle of life—

The vision—

Knew himself in Lola, and leaned
With eyes and heart and will
To seize this marvel
And make its essence eternally his own.

She, with smile of wrinkled stone,
Watched Lola dance.

Hertha

EXQUISITE to her slow silk's rustle
Nay its echo

Who save one hate-tortured might say how
perfect

This woman's silken and perfumed exquisite
Feminine beauty?

The Girl

SHE plagues me with the rapture of my sex ;
I bring her flowers and kisses,
I breathe her hair
And dream against her breasts ;
I splash her limbs with water from a pool.
Then, inspired to something of my manhood,
I sing to her, and to myself, a song,
The song of Eve :
But frightened she laughs aloud
And runs and hides within the sleepy wood.
I follow, sobbing.

The Encounter

POOOR shivering girl,
All eyes
That swim in timid wonder,
Hungry, forlorn ; street-corner girl,
How the stupid world has starved her !
Stay, I will give her riches,—
Not bread and wine and pearls,
(Those eyes were never starved for bread alone !)—
But love, soft kisses, ardent words
And fellow-admiration ; these
Will lid her lidless eyes, restore her soul
To vacant lip and bosom.
She
Will lie as summer dawn within my heart,
And moonlight on my imagination.

The Blue Girl

SHE does not walk, like me ;
She swims, an undulation, a perfumed water,
changing, changing.
When she is gone I try to think of her,
But dream and all desire turn inward, empty,—
Her passing burns no steadfast line upon my vision
To recreate her beauty from,
Beauty, like life itself, lost in its own rhythm.
Perfume and water.
Others I could dream of, and loved my dream far
more than woman.
She alone I must have, the beautiful,
Like perfumed water, flowing, flowing.

Eve's Lament

WHEN I first stopped, dismayed, and wept,
Caught in the tangled vines, at the world's
wildness,
You swiftly came, O Adam,
Heartily bade me wait, and singing gaily
Hewed through the crowded jungle growth a way.
Lonely I waited by the cave, afraid
You never should return ; but you returned,
And standing upright in the dim home-twilight,
Kissed me, and loved me safe.

Then, when I wept once more
For rivers to be crossed and hills laid low
And the great ocean to be governed,
You heartily bade me wait, and while I waited,
Lonely and desolate at home,
You, Adam, pushed your might against the hills
And laid them low ;
Pondered a moment by the swollen streams
And bridged them ;
Flung ships across the white, rebellious seas,
And governed to your will the tide and storm.
But, each adventure done, you hastened
Searching for Eve, and ever as you came

Brought the glad bold heart that stirred my heart,
Strong manhood to my womanhood so warm,—
Adventure to my adventure,—
That, united in our twilit chamber,
We laughed for contentment, lapped in vision.
Never the task too hard,
Never the way too long,
But you returned, O Adam,
Joyous to me.

Now, in a moody night
I looked upon the stars, wept forlorn,
Lost within their infinite mocking spaces,
Their soulless tangle,—wept, and cried aloud
To save my spirit slipping, slipping away.
The boy-heart swelled within you,
You bade me wait a little, then sped
Out to the solitary hills,
Down in the dripping pits
Pondering, and groping and dreaming,
To measure them, to master them, for me.

So long, so long I waited,
Grown cold with barren terror ;
Yet, turned thus upon myself
My womanhood awoke more fiercely,
Steeped richer passion in my heart,
Made me more lovely than a dream,
Desirable and warm.
And I danced, dreaming of your return,
Adventure to match adventure,
Vision to mate your vision ;

Then

You homeward crept, O Adam,
Dragged by unconscious habit, like a worm,
And stumbled upon the threshold empty-eyed.
Dumbly you sit apart
Amazed by the cold frame of things
As one stricken by a mortal inward fear;
And all my passion spilled upon your lips,
And all my trembling silence
Has not restored your boyish mirth,
Has not rekindled your eyes, melted your heart,
Given your cosmic space a human feature
Nor saved me from this modern widowhood.

Eve

WHY have you hid yourself, O Eve,
Among these laughing girls,
And why are you divided, Womanhood,
Among these anxious women?
There is no world for me,
But only silent hills and empty woods,
And restless seas and rivers,
And lights of sun and star
That bear their barren torches up and down,
And only seasons, storms and holidays;
No soul, but only thoughts and moods
And self-tormenting dreams,
Until we mate, O Eve,
And gather all these fragment-worlds and lives
Into our large and procreant passion.

Ghosts

IF you have never lain
Against the passion of a poet's heart
In his great hour,
Created by his triumph to a queen
And known the world beneath you ;
Girl,
Go straightway to a far, deserted hill
And cry, with arms outflung,
That you are dead, not living,—
Aye, mock the sun
And call the world a dream ;
Pray fiercely for birth
With words and gestures such as ghosts employ
Beneath the grave
(For you are one with them !),—
Do so
And I, whose hour passed on
Without the mating heart, the comrade arms,
The poet loneliest in his vision,—I
Will follow you, O girl,
And mingle with your bitterest sob
Silence less sweet.

Eve's Daughter

YOU have tamed me, O
Eve's daughter !
The promise of veiled eyes,
The passion of newly opened arms,
Breasts' opulence at twilight,—
All the vision I sought to mould of life
(The man-dream, womanhood),—
You tenderly seize, you change, Eve's daughter.
All womanhood is you, Eve's daughter,
And touched by you with something still and far,
An awe, remote as stars.
Eyes shine with new promise,
Arms' passion creates a new desire, a longing
To enter life's unravishable heart
You, only you can still.
O, you have tamed me, child,
Eve's daughter . . . and mine.

Love

THIS is the way, O girl, of love divine
That men and women, rooted in earth's soil
With trees and dogs, ignore:
My conscious and abundant passion
For life in God,
Directed by your unawakened beauty,
Pours out in ardent words and warm embraces,
And stirs the soul within you:
Aye, I give you soul, new life and being
From my abundance,—
Wake you in stainless, masterful ecstasy
From your long earthly sleep;
And you arise, conscious, grateful, devoted
(*In love as blind hearts say*).
Then, the steep wave spent,
My head upon your lap, my hands relaxed,
A great emptiness where I had hailed my soul,
You, O conscious girl,
Will know to render me a soul again
With ardent hands and voice, with joyous will,
And I shall rise
Your mate, restored against your need.
Ah, amid the ruin of all worlds and lives,
Our being shall not fail.
Nay,
We two shall live for ever.

Souls

WOMEN

Brightness of many limbs and wondering eyes
A calm still garden : dawn : leaves that slowly
Yield to sleepy breezes : glimmering fountains
Painting barbaric colours black and gold
On peering faces—
Odours that steep the essence of magic
Dream of infinite passion to be—

Women

Women unwearily keeping their beauty perfect
Sheltered in shady gardens
Limbs and breasts and eyes—

Suddenly

Crashing forgotten gates in thunderous war-song
Men, thrust by desire : hands outstretching : enter
Naked as they.

The Dreamer

GOD the Father in His easy chair pondering the
great book of Vision
Lets fall a casual hand the while He broods tremen-
dously the word ;
And on his little stool beside the human child,
restless for play,
Takes the slack fingers in his busy grasp,
Fondles them, tracing the great grave philosophic
lines and wrinkles
And rubs his cheek against the palm, kissing it all
over with a sudden fondness ;
But fallen from his little stool, and crying aloud,
Pulls at the casual Hand and whimpers for a word,
a glance,
All in vain, now and for ever ;
For God the Father is quite lost in the terrible
endless Vision,
And from the height whereon He broods sunk in
His easy chair,
Only the casual Hand falls down, the slack, forget-
ful fingers,
Tear-wet or kissed, gently relax, nor close the
Book, nor lift the child.

O Brutes and Dreamers !

COULD it not be
That God, turning His essence outward
Upon our world to search the things we know and
live among

For some creation corresponding to His being,
Might see, when ranging these stars and worlds,
These ponderous, slow, impenetrable shapes,
Nothing,—*nothing*?

In all these forms that stop and prison us
Only a void wherethrough His glances pass
Without resulting image?

Could it not be
That all our universe to Him is unsubstantial,
Unreal, inane?
And, passing from thence (which is nowhere) to us,
These active, self-impressing souls, their moods
and states,

Their terrible energy of good and evil,
These also make no image on His thought,—
Not even echo, shadow, memory?

But, wherever a vision-caught spirit of man
In self-oblivious loyalty labours on
This outer world, endows it with his vision,
Changes its substance, pierces it with moods
Humanized, aspiring,—*there*

O Brutes and Dreamers ! 43

God pauses, closelier turns and knows
(Not in the shaping soul or shapen world
But in their perfect union),

An actual thing at last, a correspondence,
Essence materialized, Himself attained,
The one reality in space and time?—

Could that not be, O brutes and dreamers,
Say !

Reveille

WHETHER the conscious world,
Girt round by hate and wrong and terror,
Desperately defend itself
As a few brave guards and watchful captains
Maintain about some lone remote fortress
A small circle of troubled peace;
Or whether, ourselves a blind anarchy,
We vainly pit our selfishness and fear
Against a whole outer universe of law,
Admitting across the frontier from time to time
Enough of God's terrible order and justice
To burn a small torch amid our inward gloom—
Ah, when shall we raise our battle-blinded eyes
Above this endless conflict we wage
Life by life, for a mere breathing-space and foot-
hold,—
Heart-knit, soul-united once both East and West
Thrilled by the energy of a mutual dream,
Take heed and know if brute or Prophet hold
True mirror of the attributes of man.

Before a Gauguin

I ESCAPE from all them that hold me ;
The prisons and the strong stockades of love,
The deep pits of hatred, let me go.
I pass on perforce from name to name,
Assume new qualities and titles
Sewed and patched on for the day's need
From old definitions proudly fitting once
But soiled, rent and tawdry long since
Like the heaped regalia of long unfashionable kings.
I pass on, escape even from myself.
The swiftest mood and widest embracing thought
Reel from my eager tortuous progression.
Nay, the whole world grins
Knowingly from its mask of good and evil ;
Murderers, in utmost pity, droop before their judge,
And for the sake of the world's masquerade
Dive willingly into the black mud of stigma.
Otherwise . . .
But we are all anarchists
Stumbling brave and blind through a strange lost
region
Bordering the stupendous ecstasy of life.

The Hill

BE not too certain, life,
(Or is that power of death, that tedious power
Which with insistent sneer
Shatters continually and steep in slime
The difficult house I raise,
The house of consciousness ?)—
Be not too certain of me ;
Deem me not wholly tamed,
Content with labour ineffectual
Upon this ruined house of thought ;
Or, turning to things outside,
Content to hurry a life-time through these streets
Darkened with vaster ineffectiveness
Even this sea-flung, sea-swift fog
Makes so pathetic romance of !

Count not too long upon my slavehood !
For as I have often dreamed,
There is a hill
Sloping against the dizzy, mystic sky
Whither, in a moment, I can go.

There is a hill
And, pausing for courageous breath
Pace after pace I'll climb
Fleeing from thee, O insufficient life,
A weak yet conscious Christ

Bearing his cross of aspiration.
O, bleeding and gasping on that hill
To me the vision of things
Already perfect, consummated, present
Sudden will rise, and I shall thrill
With powers you know not of,
Old tedious world of streets,
Inevitable failure, self-deception,
Death-in-life ;
For, writhing as I might be
In supreme pain, and broken
Upon the wheel of dissolution,
Never was so great aspiration void ;
And I shall wholly triumph
Convinced at last of my own perfect soul,
And God, the soul's desire.

An Old Prayer Resaid

IS it too much to seek
Among the living, one friend, one man or woman
To stand ever between me and the blinding glory
of God,
Mirroring the pure flame to my weak eyes
And visibly to every humble sense
Showing the glory?
Too much to seek?
Is there not one among the breathing
Who like the demigods of old
Mythed to a people's heart the manner and the way,
Will draw my thought and passion from itself,
Make me forget the dangerous mystery, Soul,
Wholly admiring, wholly intent upon a great nature
Heroic, tender and calm?
I drive my prayer along the crowded street
But meet only a passionate, wilful race
Or here and there a wistful fellow pilgrim;
And all the while the immanent, pitiless glory of
God
Burdens and breaks my heart.

In the Mirror

I HAVE not dared to be alone
These many months, but passed with all the
world,
A driven ghost, through the black magic
That we call life; till now
My mirror suddenly bids me halt.
Before its dimly lighted depths I pause
Seeking the image I have known, serene, heroic,
Dwelling for me within the mysterious glass,
The I . . .
Lost, lost these fearful, hurried, wasted days.
Now islanded about by silence,
Poised safe upon the twilight
Alone, intent, thrice-conscious,
I dare again, I *will* . . . and
Convinced, convincingly
Out of the glooms of my departed self
It starts, it gathers,
Shines from the mirror, throbs within my heart;
And gladder than any warrior-ravished bride
My song of triumph flows . . .
Loving the world and by all things adored.

Pilgrim

HOW often, paused before some brilliant name
Shining by thought or will ;
Or glimpsing a modern chief
Serenely intent
Upon his purpose undefinable,—
How often the shadow of ourselves
Projects far forward
Even to touch the titan we admire,
When, heart-leaping, soul-conscious,
Thither, we say, the distance to traverse,
Thither the summit we must still attain.
Our consciousness is never to itself
Sufficient and content,
But ever seems
A pilgrim thrust upon an endless way,
Toiling to reach
Some ultimate shrine of self contained in self.
The road of life winds upward, upward,
Gathering all types and natures
Into one fate,
Linking the brute to God.
Never a day
Opens our eyes and minds to a new sun
But, thrilled by fear or joy
Excessively intense

And startled from ourselves,
We recognize a way that winds in our own soul,
Bidding us follow.

And, looking beyond,
We find nor end, nor pause, nor quiet,
Only the road that winds
Upward and upward,
And the great compulsion of time and change
Goads us along the dizzy, myriad days.
Even death, we feel, but plants new pilgrim feet
Upon the ancient upward pilgrim way.

O, disheartened we lean
Upon our staff of the soul's self-recognition,
Pondering the interminable road
And our own worldly burden.

The road of life winds upward, upward,
Strewn with disheartened pilgrims
Even as you and I.

Yet, when we will to yield,
Dismayed by the cold, bleak summits of time,
And toil no more,
Leaving perfection to a tougher soul,—
Content to pause midway
With broken staff, closed eyes, and folded hands,
(A little slumber, O narcotic sleep!),—
Then, opening eyes
After the moment's frantic oblivion,
Then has the landscape changed
Unwilled, untoiled-for :
By no labour, no conscious pilgrimage of self
Our soul has gained ascent.

New vistas arise
With pleasurable moods
And, for a little, time has lost its dread.

Then first do we confess a power
Beyond our conscious purpose
Filling the universe of men and things ;
Changing, replacing, creating,
At once here, before us and behind,
Planning itself a pilgrimage so vast
That our supreme success would make it fail.
There is a power
Not to be sought, but seeking ;
Holding, not to be held ;
Using, not to be employed ;
Ignoring, not mocking personality,
Shaping the fragments of men and things
Into an order and perfection not our own.
Life is the climber-up !
Life is the pilgrim !
We but a part of the road he treads upon
Mounting the cloud-piled hill !

So, being not the climber but the climbed,
Not the eternal pilgrim but the way,
I come to find myself
Circled by a great confidence and peace.
No more shall I attempt,
Blindly afraid, to seize
His garment or sandal, and stay
Life, the creative, unstaying ;
No more shall I perplex and madden
My sensitive thought

With torment of a sheer, heart-breaking hill ;
Nay, but thankfully aware
At last, and not too late,
How rightly fits my nature to the world,
Learn to live fully, gratefully within
The perfect here and now
Which life, from full-brimmed pilgrim's wallet,
Tosses each soul in passing
Upward and upward
On his mysterious way.
 Pass freely along, O life,
God's pilgrim,
Godspeed ! I speed, I release thee !

Paradox

IF I praise death, I feel it by the genius of life :
If I praise life, I speak it within the ears of death.

Fragment

THEIR eyes shine, the rapt boy-gleam that never
before
Poured out the hearts of strong, world-toughened
men,—
Shine, and eagerly turn
The one way, Westward,
So many arrows cleaving a single mark ;
And like the wheat in windy acres tossing
Their limbs reach forth
The one way, Westward, all their ardent hands.
Their ardent hands and feet, one rapid, impetuous
rhythm
Tosses them, swaying, advancing.

The tapestries of kings superb in battle
Bore never so rich design,
Nor rugs that ancient faith made intricate
Visioning the fervent soul,
As here
These dancing feet, the citizenship of earth,
Responsive, passionate, trace
Unconsciously along the echoing street.

I follow.
I join them.
Closer, closer I press me,

Body and spirit
Urged to the central core
Of this new passion warming, transforming men.
Like a strong man bearing proudly aloft his burden
Our slow, deep-rolling voices
Carry to heaven a grave and mighty hymn.
We reach to the world's edges
Gathering all men and women,
Uniting them, creating to one titanic, puissant
nature
The myriad moods and passions of the race.
Not one avoids or declines us, impetuously receiving
In deepest heart the mutual rapture
Bursting at last the swart frontiers
Of nations, races, hatreds of class and clan.
No master to lead us,
No slave to follow ;
We go.

Janus

“THERE!

Look where the blazing star reels down
To sudden death in some mean stagnant water—
That, O friend, is signal to the doom
Rushing upon a world, a fair, dear world
That dies almost unmourned. But I
Die with it in my heart.”

My silence questioned him.

“A world,—how shall I tell it?

So calm, so gracious? Well,

It lay in little villages apart

Like secrets in a lover's memory;

In villages where family names and deeds

Survived, creating magnanimity;

And there were albums, birthdays, festivals;

And old men grave, old women queenly;

And night enframed each leisurely day in gold;

Poets were read and known;

Slow organs breathed along the shadowy street;

And manners were thought the better part of men;

October twilight,—God! it seemed as though

History itself, and all the human race,

Had come each autumn to its perfect fruitage.

Friend, believe me, a fair, dear world lies dead.”

Moved by his measured sadness

I rose to score the dead world's epitaph

On starkest rock by distant hills unknown
Where some strayed reveller of future times
Might chance upon it, and had he a soul,
Lament the passing of a kingly race.
But even as I rose I felt about me
The new world shaping in the ancient wreck ;
That modern vision of life,—city-haste
But with it city-plenitude ; and souls
Created by the tenser rhythm of crowds ;
No long-maturing names, but freer men ;
And roads hewn out like equatorial belts
From race to race ;
And cloud-lost aeroplanes ; colossal ships ;
Long inter-racial tasks, to unify
A million labourers in a single dream ;
New words, terms, thoughts,—the conscious mind
Reached out atiptoe, startled by its wealth ;
New dreams, of art and peace,
Advanced by stouter hearts than Cæsar's ;
I felt this world in labour, and I knew
Not death, but birth, had agonized my soul.

Creator

GOD looked at me . . . a woman's eyes
Piercing through and beyond
As there were nothing here,—
Nothing, where this heart beats, where this mind
labours!

Now the whole daylong I stand
Lost in this strange nothingness,
Seeking . . .
As a shadow might seek the hand that cast it,
As an echo might seek its sound,
. . . A soul.

I have been with them who run hither and thither
Before the antique silence of a church,
Who kneel at carved dark altars
And sniff wantonly the heady incense ;
They are like those who guard a forgotten fortress,
Defending a frontier no hostile army ever will
attack.

Long ago a vigorous Life passed by
Making terrible battle of being against non-being.
His memory lingers, and these
Proud of their strategy and their courage

Take arms and stand before his fading footprints
in due array.

The sun glitters on their new swords and buttons,
And death, their only foe,
Steals up and crushes them beneath the burden of
their unused armour!

May I cast this lie utterly away,
Creep out from this entanglement of memory,
Stamp underfoot the secondhand experience men
term soul.

This is the lie that fetters the world.
All men save thieves and artists mix its poison with
their daily bread.

Soul never existed before,
Will never exist until I give it being in and by
myself.

There is no type, no model;
No path worn sleek by generations of dragging
knees

Can lead me to its place.
It is a chaotic nothingness round about my life,
Flesh with my hand and eye, thought with my
thought;

It whirls past my finger-tips,
Hides beyond my swiftest imagination.
Here in its midst I stand

Lonely as no mortal ever was before,
Confronting it, stern, anguished, half-daunted,
Waiting for the great mood gathering power within
me.

Soon shall I leap forward for the last time,
Seize the chaos with all my being, godlike,

Creatively shape it into a perfect spirit, *self*,
Or fall back prostrate, knowing myself no better
than dogs and trees.

The blatant legions of triumphant hell
Swing past with reckless booty.
What faith, what sureness of the daily life!
God looked at me. . . .

Creation

NATURE'S truant and scapegoat.
When I was made the earth held back her flame,
Mixed no prodigious sulphur with my blood ;
Said : Here's one must beg or steal his life
Day by day ; I'll give him nothing mine.
How long I crouched apart ;
How long I hated the ample-winged birds,
Envied the sturdy oxen, the swift hound, the
painless tree.
When a man passed I wept, bewildered.
How long I begged of water its ease,
Of wind its lightness, of fire its passion.
I crouched apart from laughter and tears ;
Love I knew not, only I knew that hearts with
sulphurous blood
Beat grief and rapture through all lives but mine.
All else is perfect ; nothing am I, I said.
Then, like a tiny puff of wind on the great sea
Thickened by obdurate calm,
A prayer, a feeble spirit-breath sighed within me.
My hand tightened as for a titan task.
I gazed at it, bewildered,
Said : Nay, another suffering begins ;
Now while the burden of storm and season
And men and things harries the gable of life,
A cunninger spite steals in beside the hearth

To pester the feeble flame.

But, stirring again my thick obdurate calm,

The prayer increased.

My breath drew deep, as for the dance of passion.

What is this? I cried.

Stronger, stronger it heaved and whirled and
swirled.

I could not crouch, I rose, I stood erect,

Clenched hand, drew breath.

Impelled by some new sense not mine, yet mine,

I leaned swiftly to myself, as to heaped inarticu-
late clay,

Moulded the mass to likeness of a dream,

Fondled the outline to a wondrous curve,

Gave eyes, ears, breath.

Hasten, said God : not so in a thousand years

Shall man create himself.

Swifter I laboured, singing.

Then when the shape fairly answered my desire,

Answered, contained the vision of things perfect,

I in my feeble days painfully descried,

I entered in, assumed it as my own.

Nature's scapegoat !

While men and beasts drag the burden of nature,

Her being, loved for her sake, not their own,

Her need their passion, her desire their power,

I stand apart with God

And brood upon the world behind this dream.

Ecstasy

O LAST, unassailable perfect triumph of life,
The very signal of attained being to avidest
men :

When the bound, slow-groping panting soul
Abruptly risen to freedom, joyously perceptive
In presence of some unexpected beautiful thing,
Cries out to perish,
To die all through straightway, and nevermore *be*,—
Unless, unless it be the universe itself,
Container of all space and time,
Container of that very moment of sweet anguish,
That very death-life cry and the mad, rent spirit ;
Container of itself—as the opulent spring contains
One clear, articulate bird—as the unpartisan year
One season of spring whose pomp, whose passing
alike

Inspires no pride, no awe—*returning again*.

How the life-filled spirit of man,
In its great moment, knows and envies God.

Goal

*OVER my head bowed in the passing of the soul's
first rapture
The day burns calmly and slow pressed in its brazen
bowl
Like incense peacefully consumed by shrines where few
men worship ;
Odours arising drift and catch at my weary senses,
Wakening an inner power my will, my courage never
inspired.
Without ash the day burns out, without pollution ; calmly
and slow
The day in its brazen bowl consumes the perfumed ash of
yesterday.
Mingled in one strange maddening odour the incense of
the passing moment
Restores the old, forgotten years. All time returns, a
strange perfume.
To-morrow so shall burn, and its to-morrow. No moment
wastes and none
Sinks to ashes in the bowl that calmly burns all life away.
My will, my name, my love, my soul consume ; O God,
at last I am.*





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